

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

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CHP OFFICER KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

California Highway Patrol (CHP) Officer Saul Martinez died Thursday, May 15, 1997, one week after he was struck by a car while pushing his partner out of its path. Officer Martinez, assigned to the CHP's Indio office, and his partner Officer Donovan Rice, were investigating a car parked on the wrong side of the road when a second vehicle veered off the roadway.

"Officer Martinez is the 182nd officer in the 68 years of Highway Patrol existence to make the ultimate sacrifice while carrying out his duty," stated CHP Commissioner Dwight Helmick. "This remarkable individual was very active in his community, recently named Latino Peace Officer of the Year for the Indio CHP area and well-liked by his co-workers. In spite of all his accomplishments and responsibilities, his family always came first."

Governor Wilson has announced that Officer Martinez will receive the California Medal of Valor, the state's highest award in recognition of his heroic actions.

"Officer Saul Martinez exemplifies the willingness to carry out sworn responsibility, even to the sacrifice of life, that universally characterizes Highway Patrol Officers. When he accepted the badge, he took an oath of office which includes the words, '...and lay down my life, rather than swerve from the path of duty.' His death is a loss that is deeply felt by every member of this Department. The example of his life is one that we will try to live up to in our own lives," Helmick said.

Officer Martinez, a 7-year veteran, is survived by his wife and three children.

He is the first CHP Officer killed in the line of duty in 1997.

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